

THE CIA AND DECISION-MAKING

By Chester L. Cooper

"The most fundamental method of work . . . is to determine our working policies according to the actual conditions. When we study the causes of the mistakes we have made we find that they all arose because we departed from the actual situation . . . and were subjective in determining our working policies."—"The Thoughts of Mao Tse-tung."

IN bucolic McLean, Virginia, screened by trees and surrounded by a high fence, squats a vast expanse of concrete and glass known familiarly as the "Pickle Factory," and more formally as "Headquarters, Central Intelligence Agency." Chiselled into the marble which is the only relieving feature of the building's sterile main entrance are the words, "The Truth Shall Make You Free." The quotation from St. John was personally chosen for the new building by Allen W. Dulles over the objection of several subordinates who felt that the Agency, then still reeling from the Bay of Pigs débâcle, should adopt a somewhat less lofty motto. (In those dark days of late 1961, some suggested that a more appropriate choice would be "Look Before You Leap.") But Dulles had a deeper sense of history than most. Although he was a casualty of the Bay of Pigs and never sat in the Director's office with its view over the Potomac, he left a permanent mark not only on the Agency which he had fashioned but on its building which he had planned.

Allen Dulles was famous among many and notorious among some for his consummate skill as an intelligence operative ("spook" in current parlance), but one of his greatest contributions in nurturing the frail arrangements he helped to create to provide intelligence support to Washington's top-level foreign-policy-makers.

Harry Truman, whose Administration gave birth to both the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency, recalls that, "Each time the National Security Council is about to consider a certain policy—let us say a policy having to do with Southeast Asia—it immediately calls upon the CIA to present an estimate of the effects such a policy is likely to have. . . ." President Truman painted a somewhat more cozy relationship between the NSC and the CIA than probably existed during, and certainly since, his Administration. None the less, it is fair to say that the intelligence community, and especially the CIA, played an important advisory role in high-level policy deliberations during the 1950s and early 1960s.

To provide the most informed intelligence judgments on the effects a contemplated policy might have on American national security interests, a group especially tailored for the task was organized in 1950 within the CIA. While this step would probably have been taken sooner or later, the communist victory

STATINTL

Nixon Reported Weighing Revamping of Intelligence Services

By BENJAMIN WELLES
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 10 — President Nixon is said to be considering a major reorganization of the nation's foreign intelligence activities to improve output and cut costs.

Those familiar with the plan say that the options range from creating a new Cabinet-level department of intelligence to merely strengthening the now-imprecise authority of Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence, over the global intelligence operations of the Pentagon and other federal agencies.

The reorganization plan has recently been presented to President Nixon. It covers 30 to 40 typewritten pages and was prepared primarily by James R. Schlesinger, assistant director of the Office of Management and Budget, and K. Wayne Smith, a former Pentagon systems analyst now on the National Security Council staff.

The informants say the plan grew from instructions Mr. Nixon gave his staff last autumn, to draft various reorganizational and cost-cutting studies.

Complaints Voiced

Both the President and Henry A. Kissinger, his assistant for national security affairs, have frequently expressed dissatisfaction over the erratic quality of the foreign intelligence

provided them. Some White House officials estimate that at least \$500-million could be cut from the \$5-billion spent annually on national intelligence.

Mr. Nixon and Mr. Kissinger have said that while occasionally intelligence of extreme usefulness — such as the incredibly detailed information on Soviet and Chinese Communist missile development obtained from spy satellites — has been produced, the service has frequently failed to forecast such sudden developments as the riots that forced a political reshuffle in Poland last December.

Mr. Nixon is particularly dissatisfied, his associates say, by the cost and size of the Government's global intelligence operations when compared with their results. In addition to the Central Intelligence Agency, five federal agencies are involved in intelligence overseas. At least 200,000 people are involved, 150,000 of these uniformed personnel in the Defense Department.

The President was seriously irritated, aides say, by two recent failures of the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency, which numbers 3,000 and spends an estimated \$500-million yearly. One was faulty intelligence prior to the abortive prison-camp raid at Son Tay, in North Vietnam, last November. The other was failure to forecast North Vietnamese resistance

to the South Vietnamese Army's incursion into Laos Feb. 5 to March 25.

Their Estimates Were Better

"Hanoi threw 35,000 men or four divisions against the 17,000 in ARVN," said one qualified source. "They stripped North Vietnam of troops, gambling that the United States wouldn't invade the North — and they were right. Their estimates were better than ours."

The most drastic option open to Mr. Nixon would be the creation of a new department of intelligence to be headed by an official of Cabinet rank. It would combine the Central Intelligence Agency with 15,000 civilian employees; the Defense Department's code-cracking National Security Agency with 100,000 uniformed personnel and its Defense Intelligence Agency with 3,000. The C.I.A. spends about \$500-million yearly; the National Security Agency \$1-billion and the Defense Intelligence Agency \$500-million.

The merit, some experts say, would be to concentrate in one department the collection of foreign intelligence now performed not only by the C.I.A. but also by the Army, Navy, and Air Force separately around the world. However, opposition would be forthcoming from vested interests in the armed services and in Congress. They say, therefore, that Mr. Nixon is unlikely to adopt it.

At the other end of the scale, informants report, Mr. Nixon could merely issue an executive order defining — thus strengthening — the authority of Mr. Helms over the intelligence operations of such powerful federal agencies as the Pentagon, the State Department, the Atomic Energy Commission and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Officers Meet Weekly

Their principal intelligence officers meet weekly as members of the United States Intelligence Board. Mr. Helms, as the President's chief intelligence adviser and head of the C.I.A., presides, but his authority is unclear. It derives from a letter written by President Kennedy in 1963 to John A. McCone, one of Mr. Helms's predecessors, and has never been updated.

While Mr. Helms has full control over the C.I.A., the Pentagon's worldwide intelligence, which Robert F. Froehke, an

Assistant Secretary of Defense has estimated costs \$2.9-billion yearly.

"When you have the authority but don't control the resources," a Defense Department official observed, "you tend to walk very softly."

The President is said to regard Mr. Helms as the nation's most competent professional intelligence officer. Last month, informants disclose, Mr. Nixon wrote Mr. Helms congratulating the C.I.A. on its recent annual estimate of Soviet defense capabilities.

To provide control over the huge intelligence system and make it responsive to his needs, Mr. Nixon is likely, his staff associates say, to choose one — or a combination of — the middle options before him that do not require Congressional approval.

Closer Ties Possible

It is likely, officials say, that Mr. Nixon will eventually bring Mr. Helms and a top-level staff of evaluators from C.I.A. headquarters in Langley, Va., closer to the White House, possibly into the National Security Council staff.

Officials concede that under a reorganization Mr. Helms might relinquish to his deputy, Lieut. Gen. Robert E. Cushman, of the Marine Corps, some of his responsibility for the C.I.A.'s day-to-day collection operations and concentrate, instead, on intelligence evaluation for the President. One possibility envisaged under the reorganization would be the creation by Mr. Helms of an evaluation staff in the White House drawn from the C.I.A.'s Office of Current Intelligence and its Office of National Estimates. The latter prepares long-range studies in depth of potential trouble spots.

Another would be the creation by Mr. Nixon of a White House intelligence evaluations staff made up of Mr. Helms, General Cushman, Lieut. Gen. Donald V. Bennett, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, and Ray S. Cline, director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.